

A BRIEF

# Examination *and* State OF LIBERTY SPIRITUAL,

BOTH

With Respect to Persons in their private Capacity,  
and in their Church-Society and Communion.

WRITTEN

For the Establishment of the Faithful, Informa-  
tion of the Simple-Hearted, and Reproof  
of the Arrogant and High-Minded,

*By a Lover of True Liberty, as it is in JESUS,*

WILLIAM PENN.

To go among the PEOPLE of the LORD,

CALLED

Q U A K E R S.

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*If the Son therefore shall make ye free, ye  
shall be free indeed. John viii. 36.*

*If we walk in the Light, as he is in the Light,  
then have we Fellowship one with another,  
and the Blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth  
us from all Sin. 1 John, i. 7.*

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To the People of the Lord, called  
Q U A K E R S.

*Dear Friends and Brethren,*

**I**T hath of long time rested with some pressure upon my Spirit, for *Zion's* sake, and the Peace of *Jerusalem*, to write something of the Nature of True Spiritual Liberty; *Liberty*, one of the most Glorious Words and Things in the World, but little understood, and frequently abused by many. I beseech Almighty God to preserve you, his People, in the right Knowledge and Use of that Liberty, which *Jesus Christ*, the Captain of our Salvation, hath purchased for us, and is redeeming us into, who hath led Captivity captive, and is giving Gifts to them that truly believe in his Name. *Christ's* Liberty is obtained through *Christ's* Cross; they that would be his Free-men, must be his Bonds-men, and wear his blessed Yoke. His Liberty is from Sin, not to Sin; to do his will, and not our own; no, not to speak an Idle Word. 'Tis not I that live (saith the Apostle) but *Christ* that liveth in me, who had set him Free from the Power of Sin, and brought Immortality to Light in him; whence he learned thus to triumph, *O Death, where is thy Sting! O Grave, where is thy Victory!* This is the personal Freedom that comes by *Jesus Christ*, to as many as receive him in the Way, and for the End for which God hath given him, to wit to be a Saviour and a Leader, to save us from our

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Corruptions, and guide us in the Narrow Way of his holy Cross, and through the strait Gate of Self-denial, which leads to Eternal Life. And as many as have entered at this Door, are come to have Unity with God, and one with another; to love him above all, and their Neighbours as themselves; yea, to prefer each other before themselves. Such will not violate the great Law of their Lord and Master; *Love one another*, the New; and yet the Old Commandment: These dwell in Love, and so they dwell in God; for God is Love. 'Twas the beloved Disciple's Testimony, and it comes up to what another man of God hath said, namely, *The Church that dwells in God, if she dwells in God, then in Love; consequently her Members are in Union, of one mind in Church Matters, since she has but one Head to Rule her.*

Peruse this brief Discourse in this Love, and it may be to Edification. My aim is to assert the Truth, detect Error, and point in true Brotherly Kindness at those Shoals and Sands some by Mistake, or Over Boldness, have and may run upon. O Friends! I greatly desire, that the Spirit of Love, Wisdom, and a sound Understanding, of Meekness, Judgment, and Mercy, may ever rest upon you, that blamelessly you may be kept, an holy Family, at Unity with itself, to the Lord God your Redeemer, that he over all may in you, through you, and by you be Exalted, Honoured and Praised, who is worthy and blessed for ever.

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A BRIEF  
Examination *and* State  
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Liberty Spiritual, &c.

*Question.* **W**Hat is Spiritual Liberty?

*Answer.* It is twofold; there is a true and a false Liberty, as a true and false Spirit, the right discerning of which concerns every one's Eternal Well-being.

**Q.** What is true Spiritual Liberty?

**A.** Deliverance from Sin by the perfect Law in the Heart, *The perfect Law of Liberty*, James 2. otherwise called, *The Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus, that makes free from the Law of Sin and Death*; else-where stiled, *The Law of Truth writ in the Heart*, which makes Free indeed, as sayeth *Christ*, *If the Son therefore shall make ye free, ye shall be free indeed*. So that the Liberty of God's People stands in the truth, and their Communion in it, and in the Perfect Spiritual Law of *Christ Jesus*, which delivers and preserves them from every evil Thing that doth or would embondage. In this blessed Liberty, it is not the will nor Wisdom of Man, neither the vain Affections and Lusts that rule, or give Law to the Soul; for the Minds

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of all such as are made Free by the Truth, are by the Truth conducted in doing and suffering through their Earthly Pilgrimage.

Q. What is false Liberty?

A. A Departing from this blessed Spirit of Truth, and a Rebellion against this Perfect *Law of Liberty* in the Heart, and being at Liberty to do our own Wills; upon which cometh Reproof and Judgment.

Q. But are there not some things wherein we ought to be left to our own freedom?

A. We are not our own, for we are bought with a Price; and in all things ought we to glorify God with our Bodies, Souls and Spirits, which are the Lord's.

Q. But must we have a Motion or Command from the Spirit of Truth for all things that we do?

A. That may be according to the Truth, which may not be by the immediate Motion or Command of the Truth; for that is according to the Truth, that is not against the mind of the Truth, either particularly or generally exprest. The Truth commands me to *do all to the Praise and Glory of God*; but not that I should wait for a Motion to do every particular thing. For Example: The variety of Actions in Trading, Commerce and Husbandry, the variety of Flesh, Fish and Fowl for Food, with more of the same Nature, in all which there is a Choice and Liberty, but still according to the Truth, and within the holy Bounds and Limits of it.

Q. Then it seems there are some things left to our Freedom.

A. Yes;

*A.* Yes; but it must still be according to the Mind of God's Truth: There are things enjoined, such as relate to our Duty to God, to our Superiours, to the household of Faith, and to all Men and Creatures; these are Indispensible. There are also things that may be done or left undone, which may be called Indifferent; as what sort of Meat I will eat to day, whether I will eat Flesh, Fish or Herbs, or what Hours I will eat my Meals at, with many such outward things of Life and Converse; yet even in such cases I ought to act according to the Truth, in the Temperance and Wisdom of it.

*Q.* But doth not Freedom extend farther than this; for since God hath given me a Manifestation of his Spirit to profit withall, and that I have the Gift of God in myself, should I not be left to act according as I am free and persuaded in my own Mind, in the things that relate to God, lest looking upon myself as obliged by what is revealed unto another, though it be not revealed unto me, I should be led out of my own Measure, and act upon another's Motion, and so offer a blind Sacrifice to God?

*A.* This is true in a sense, that is, if thou art such a one that canst do nothing against the Truth, but for the Truth, then mayest thou safely be left to thy freedom in the things of God, and the reason is plain; because thy freedom stands in the perfect *Law of Liberty*, in the Law of the Spirit of Life in *Christ Jesus*, and in the Truth, which is *Christ Jesus*, which makes thee free indeed, that is, perfectly free from all that is bad, and perfectly free

free to all that is Holy, Just, Lovely, Honest, Comely, and of good Report; but if thou pleadest thy Freedom against such things, yea, obstructest and slightest such good, wholesome and requisite things, thy Freedom is naught, dark, perverse, out of the Truth, and against the perfect Law of Love and Liberty.

Q. But must I conform to things whether I can receive them or no? Ought I not to be left to the Grace and Spirit of God in my own Heart?

A. To the first part of the Question, nay; to the last, yea. But now let us consider what is the reason thou canst not receive them: Is the fault in the things themselves? Are they inconsistent with Truth, or will not the Truth own or assent unto them, or is the fault in thee? that is to say, is it thy Weakness, or thy Carelessness? If thy Weakness, it is to be borne with, and to be informed; if thy Carelessness, thou oughtst to be admonished; for it is a dangerous Principle, and pernicious to true Religion, and which is worse, it is the Root of Ranterism to assert, that nothing is a Duty incumbent upon thee, but what thou art persuaded is thy Duty; for the Seared Conscience pleads his Liberty against all Duty, the Dark Conscience is here unconcerned, the Dead Conscience is here uncondemned, unless this Distinction be allowed of, that there may be an Ignorance or an Insensibility from Inability or Incapacity, or a Dark Education; and an Ignorance and Insensibility, from Carelessness, Disobedience, Prejudice, &c. So that though thou art not to conform to a thing ignorantly,

rantly, yet thou art seriously to consider, why thou art ignorant, and what the cause of such Ignorance may be: certainly it can't be in God, nor in his gift to thee; it must then needs be in thyself, who hast not yet received a sense for or against the Matter, about which thou art in doubt. To the second part of the Question; ought I not to be left to the Grace of God in my own Heart?

*Answer.* That is of all things most desirable, since they are well left that are there left; for there is no fear of want of Unity, where all are left with the one Spirit of Truth; they must be of one mind; they can't be otherwise. So that to plead this against Unity, is to abuse the very Plea, and to commit the greatest Contradiction to that very Doctrine of Scripture, viz. *That all should be guided by the Grace and Spirit of God in themselves;* for the end of that Doctrine is certainty. *They shall all know me, sayeth the Lord, from the least to the greatest. And I will give them one Heart, and one Way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of their Children after them, Jer 32. 39. And I will give them one Heart, and I will put a new Spirit within you; and I will take the Stony Heart out of their Flesh, and will give them an Heart of Flesh, Ezekiel 11. 19. And the multitude of them that believed were of one Heart, and of one Soul, Acts 4. 32.* Is not this Unity too? *I will restore unto you a pure Language; they shall be of one Heart and of one Mind, and great shall be their Peace.* Therefore I must say to thee, Friend  
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What if thou wilt not be left with the Grace and Spirit of God in thyself, nor wait for its Mind, nor be watchful to its Revelations, nor humble and quiet till thou hast received such necessary Manifestations; but pleadest against the Counsel of the Spirit of the Lord in other faithful Persons, under the Pretence of being left to his Spirit in thyself, by which Means thou opposest the Spirit to the Spirit, and pleadest for Disunity, under the Name of *Liberty*? I ask thee, May not I exhort thee to the Practice of that I am moved to press thee to the Practice of? If not, thou art the Imposer, by restraining me from my *Christian Liberty*; and not only so, but away goeth preaching, and with it the Scriptures, that are both appointed of God for *Exhortation, Reproof,* and *Instruction*.

Q. But are there not various Measures, Diversities of Gifts, and several Offices in the Body?

A. True; but therefore are not the Members of one Mind, one Will, and one Judgment, in common and universal Matters, especially relating to the Family and Church of God? And, indeed, there cannot be a falser Reasoning, than to conclude; *Discord* from *Diversity*, *Contrariety* from *Variety*. Is there Contrariety of *Bloods, Lives, Feelings, Seeings, Hearings, Tastings, Smellings*, in one and the same Body, at one and the same Time? No such Matter: Experience is a Demonstration against all such Insinuations. So that though it be granted, that there is Di-

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versity of Gifts, yet there is no Disagreement in  
 Sense; and though Variety of Offices, yet no  
 Contrariety in Judgment concerning those Offices.  
 Well saith the holy Scripture of Truth, *there is  
 but one God; the Lord our God is but one Lord;  
 there is but one God and Father of all Things,  
 that are good; and there is but one Lord, one  
 Faith, and one Baptism.* And his Light, Life  
 and Spirit is at Unity with itself in all. What  
 comes from the Light, Life or Spirit, in one; it  
 is the same in Truth and Unity to the rest, as if  
 it rise in themselves. This is seen in our Assem-  
 blies every Day, and will be, throughout all Ge-  
 nerations, in the Church of God, among those  
 that live in the lowly Truth, in which the pure  
 Sense and sound Judgment stands: *God is not the  
 God of Confusion, but Order.* Every one in his  
 Order is satisfied, hath Unity and true Fellowship  
 with whatever comes from the Life of God in  
 another; for this precious Life reacheth through-  
 out the Heritage of God, and is the common Life  
 that giveth the common Feeling and Sense to the  
 Heritage of God. Degree or Measure in the same  
 Life can never contradict or obstruct that which  
 is from the same Life, for the common Benefit  
 of the Family of God. *The Lord is the un-  
 measurable and incomprehensible glorious Being  
 of Life;* yet have we Unity with him in all his  
 Works, who are come to his divine Measure of  
 Light and Truth in our own Hearts, and live there-  
 in; and shall we not have Unity with that which  
 proceeds from a Fellow Creature? In short, the  
 Saints

Saints Way is in the Light, wherein there is neither Doubts nor Discord; yea, they are Children of the Light, and called Light, and *the Lights of the World*; and can it be supposed, that such should disagree and contradict each other, in their exterior Order and Practice in the Church before the World. Oh! the blessed seamless Garment of *Jesus*! Where that is known, these Things can never rise. But yet again, *the just Man's Path* is not only a Light, but a *shining Light*, Brightness itself: Certainly there can be no stumbling. It is also said, *that Light is sown for the Righteous*; then the Righteous shall never want Light upon any Occasion: And saith that beloved Evangelist and Apostle of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, *they that walk in the Light have Fellowship with one another.* 1 *John*, i. Whence it is easy to conclude, they that go out of the Fellowship, go out of the Light; but if they that walk in the Light, have Fellowship one with another, what shall we say of those that plead being left to the Light, to justify their not having Fellowship one with another? And which is yet worse, who suppose People may conscientiously and justifiably dissent within themselves, and that by Reason of the Variety of the Degrees of the Spirit and Grace, that are given of God unto them; as if the lesser Degree may dissent from the greater, because of its not being able to comprehend it; and to make this Principle more authentic, such tell us, *This is the ancient Principle of Truth*; and



object, *How will you else be able to maintain the Quakers Principles?* The Fallacy of all which lieth (as I said before) in not rightly distinguishing between Diversity and Disagreement, Variety and Contrariety; for this Diversity hath Concord, and this Variety hath Unity: And it is a Blindness that hath too much of late happened to some, by going from the one Life and Spirit of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, first to fall into Disagreements, and then plead for it, under the Notion of *Diversity of Measures*. I would ask all such Persons, who arrogate to themselves such a peculiar Knowledge of the ancient Principles of Truth, or the *Quakers* first Principles: 1st, *Whether they believe there be a Christian Body?* 2dly, *Whether this Body hath a Head?* 3dly, *Whether Christ be not this Head?* 4thly, *Whether this Head be without Eyes, Ears, Smell and Taste, and this Body without Sense and Feeling?* If not, *Whether this Head seeth, heareth, smelleth, tasteth differing and contrarily to itself?* And *whether this Body hath a contrary Feeling at the same Time about the same Thing?* And if it be true, that the Church of *Christ*, redeemed by his most precious Blood to live to him, see with the same Eye, hear with the same Ear, speak with the same Mouth, liveth by the same Breath, and are led by the same Spirit, where is this *Disagreement, Contrariety, or Dissent*, about the Things of his Church?

2. But

Q But the Members of *Christ's Church* in the primitive Times, had *different* Apprehensions; as the Apostles, and the People gathered by them.

A. Pray let me know who they were, and in what Cases.

Q The Persons were *Paul* and *Peter*; and those Christians that differed about Meats; and the Scripture is plain in the Case.

A. The Difference between *Peter* and *Paul* (in the *Acts*) testifies the Weakness of *Peter*, and the Place justifies *Paul's* Reproof of his too great Compliance with the *Jews* in some of their Rites, which makes against *Liberty of various Practices* in the Church of *Christ*, and not for indulging them. That Instance about the Difference of *Christians*, as to Meats, &c. has nothing in it to the End for which it is alledged; for this related not to *Church-Order* or *Communion*, but private and personal Freedoms, what each might do with Respect to themselves; that is, they might make Laws to themselves, in Things that only concerned private Persons, and it centred there. Here, *What I will eat, When I will eat*; Things to myself, and for myself, as a Man having Power over my own Appetite: This Liberty in Things private, personal and indifferent, makes nothing for *dissenting about Church Matters in Things of Communion and Society*, and that also are not indifferent (as to eat Fish, or eat Flesh, or eat Herbs, plainly is) but necessary, as to be careful and orderly about the external Business of the Church. These are no  
*Jewish*

*Jewish* Rites, nor shadowy Ceremonies, no Meats nor Drinks, that are private and personal, where Weakness is apt to mistake (that were an unnecessary and unchristian Yoke to bear) but Things comely, orderly, and of good Report, that tend to Purity, Peace, and Diligence in Things acceptable to God, and requisite among his People in their temporal Christian Capacity. And herein the Apostle *Paul* exercised his godly Authority; and we find, that not only those that opposed themselves to it, as thinking, *he took too much upon him, demanding a Mark of Christ's speaking in him*, are, in Scripture, branded with *Contention*. But the true Believers, that had in themselves *a Mark of Christ's speaking in him*, were of *one Mind*, and avoided such as were given to *Contention*; for it was not the Custom of the Churches of *Christ*. Thus were *Christ's* People of one Heart in Things relating to their Communion; yet a little further, they that have the Mind of *Christ*, are of one Mind; for *Christ* is not divided. They that have *Christ* for their Head, have one Counsellor and Prophet, one Seer and Bishop, they disagree not in their Judgments in Things relating to him, and the Good of his Church, they have one and the same Guide; for *the one Spirit, into which they have all drank, and by it are baptised into one Body, leads them all*. Now to every Member is *a Measure of the same Spirit given to profit with*, and though every Member is not an Eye, nor an Ear, nor a Mouth, yet every Member hath Unity with the  
 Eye,

Eye, with the Ear, with the Mouth, in their proper and respective Acts, and they one with the other: the Eye sees for the Mouth, the Mouth speaks for the Eye, and the Ear hears for both; this Variety hath no Discord; but, in this Diversity of Gifts and Offices, each Member is sensible of the other, and moves and acts by one and the same Life, Spirit and Guidance, which is omnipresent, proportionable to every Member in its distinct Office. It must be granted, that there are Helps in the Church, as well as that there is a Church at all; and the Holy Ghost has compared those Helps (as is before mentioned) to several Members and Senses of Man's Body, as an Eye, an Hand, a Foot, Hearing, Smelling, &c. All then cannot be the Eye, neither can all be the Hand; for then they would confound their Office, and act disagreeably to the Ordination of the great Order of his Church. And if I will not comply with him, that God hath made an Eye, because I am not that Eye, or an Hand, because I am not that Member myself, nor a Party to the Action, or Performance of that Member, I resist the Lord, though under Pretence of resisting Man for the Lord's Sake. And, truly, this is the Rock that some of our own Time, as well as Persons of former Ages, have split upon; they have not been contented with their own Station in the Body, they have not kept to their own Gift, nor been taken up with the Duty of their own Place in the Church. If he that is a Foot would be a Hand, and the Hand

Hand covets to be an Eye, envying others their allotted Station, through Height of Mind, and walking loose from the holy Cross, there can be no such Thing as Concord and Fellowship in the Church of *Christ*.

Furthermore, since the Spirit of the Lord is one in all, it ought to be obeyed through another, as well as in one's self; and this I affirm to you, that the same lowly Frame of Mind, that receives and answers the Mind of the Spirit of the Lord in a Man's self, will receive and have Unity with the Mind of the same Spirit through another, and the Reason is plain; because the same Self-evidencing Power and Virtue, that ariseth from the Measure of the Spirit of Truth in one's self, and that convinceth a Man in his own Heart, doth also attend the Discovery of the Mind of the same Spirit, when delivered by another; for the Words of the second *Adam*, the quickning Spirit through another, are Spirit and Life, as well as in thy own Particular: this is discerned by the spiritual Man that judgeth all Things, although the carnal Man pleadeth *being left to his Freedom*; and, it may be, talks of *being left to the Spirit in himself too*, the better to escape the Sense and Judgment of the spiritual Man. It is my earnest Desire, that all, that have any Knowledge of the Lord, would have a tender Care how they use that Plea against their faithful Brethren, that God put into their Mouths, against the persecuting Priests and Hirelings of the World, namely, *I must mind the Spirit of God in myself*;

*myself*; for though it be a great Truth, that all are to be thereunto left, yet it is as true, that he, whose Soul is left with the Spirit of Truth in himself, differs not from his Brethren that are in the same Spirit; and as true it is, that those, who err from the Spirit of Truth, may plead *being left to the Spirit in themselves*, against the Motion and Command of the Spirit through another, when it pleaseth not his or her high Mind and perverse Will; for a Saying may be true or false, according to the subject Matter it is spoken upon, or applied to; we own the Assertion, we deny the Application: there lies the Snare. It is true, the People of God ought to be left to the Guidings of the Spirit of God in themselves; but for this to be so applied, as to disregard the Preachings or Writings of *Christ's* enlightened Servants, because by them applied properly to the Preaching or Writing of false Prophets and Seducers, will, by no Means, follow. I say, the Doctrine is true, but not exclusively of all external Counsel or Direction; therefore false in Application, where Men are allowed to have had the Fear of God, and the Mind of his Spirit, and are not proved to have acted in their own Wills and Wisdom, or without the Guidance of the Spirit of God, about the Things of his Church and Kingdom.

Q. But though this be true, which hath been alledged for heavenly Concord; yet what if I do not presently see that Service in a Thing, that

the rest of my Brethren agree in: in this Case what is my Duty and theirs ?

*A.* It is thy Duty to wait upon God in Silence and Patience, out of all fleshly Consultations; and as thou abidest in the Simplicity of the Truth, thou wilt receive an Understanding with the rest of thy Brethren about the Thing doubted; and it is their Duty, whilst thou behavest thyself in Meekness and Humility, to bear with thee, and carry themselves tenderly and lovingly towards thee; but if, on the contrary, thou disturbest their godly Care and Practice, and growest contentious, and exaltest thy Judgment against them, they have Power from God to exhort, admonish and reprove thee; and, if thou perseverest therein, in his Name to refuse any further Fellowship with thee, till thou repentest of thy Evil.

Q. But lest I should mistake, when thou speakest of true Liberty, that it stands in being made free by the Truth from all Unrighteousness, dost thou mean, that no other Persons ought to have the Liberty of exercising their dissenting Consciences; but that Force may be lawful to reduce such as are reputed erroneously conscientious ?

*A.* By no Means: It were a great Wickedness against God, who is Lord of the Souls and Spirits of Men, and ought to preside in all Consciences, who, as the Apostle saith, is the only Potentate, and hath Immortality. For though I give the true Liberty of Soul and Conscience  
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to those only that are set free by the Power of *Christ*, from the Bondage of Sin and Captivity of Death; yet do I not intend, that any Person or Persons should be in the least harmed for the external Exercise of their dissenting Consciences in Worship to God, though erroneous; for though their Consciences be blind, yet they are not to be forced; such Compulsion giveth no Sight, neither do corporal Punishments produce Conviction. This we, above all People in our Day, have withstood, in speaking, writing, and suffering, and, blessed be God, continue so to do with Faithfulness; for Faith is the Gift of God, and forced Sacrifices are not pleasing to the Lord.

Q. But, according to thy Argument, it may be my Fault, that I have not the Gift of Faith; and, upon this Presumption, it may be, thou wilt inflict some temporal Penalties upon me.

A. No such Matter; for such Kind of Faults are not to be punished with temporal or worldly Penalties; for whether the Errors be through Weakness or Wilfulness, not relating to moral Practice, all external Coertion and corporal Punishment is excluded; *for the Weapons of our Warfare are not carnal, but spiritual.*

Q. But what then is the Extent of the Power of the Church of *Christ*, in Case of Schism or Heresy?

A. The Power that *Christ* gave to his Church was this, *the Offenders, after the first and second Admonition* (not repenting) *should be rejected,*

not imprisoned, plundered, banished, or put to Death; this belongs to the Whore and false Prophet. Oh! all these Things have come to pass for Want of Humility, for Want of the ancient Fear, and keeping in the quiet Habitation of the Just. The Truth in you all shall answer me; and this I affirm, from the Understanding I have received of God, not only that the Enemy is at Work to scatter the Minds of Friends, by that loose Plea, *What hast thou to do with me? Leave me to my Freedom, and to the Grace of God in myself,* and the like; but this Proposition and Expression, as now understood and alledged, is a Deviation from, and a Perversion of the ancient Principle of Truth; for this is the plain Consequence of this Plea, if any one, especially if they are but lately convinced, shall say, *I see no Evil in paying Tythes to Hireling Priests, in that they are not claimed by divine Right, but by the civil Law of the Land. I see no Evil in marrying by the Priest, for he is but a Witness. Furthermore, I see no Evil in declining a publick Testimony in suffering Times, or hiding in Times of Persecution; for I have Christ's and Paul's Examples. I see no Evil in worshipping and respecting the Persons of Men; for whatever others do, I intend a sincere Notice that I take of those I know, and have a good Esteem for. Lastly, I see no Evil in keeping my Shop shut upon the World's Holy-Days and Mass-Days (as they call them) though they are rather lewdly and superstitiously*  
*than*

*than religiously kept; for I would not willingly give any Offence to my Neighbours. And since your Testimony is against Imposition, and for leaving every one to the Measure of the Grace which God hath given him, not only no Man hath Power to reprove or judge me, but I may be as good a Friend as any of you, according to my Measure. And now here is Measure set up against Measure, which is Confusion itself—Babel indeed; this is that very Rock both Professors and Profane would long since have run us upon, namely, That a Way is hereby opened to all the World's Libertines, to plead the Light within for their Excesses, which indeed grieves the Spirit of God, and was severely judged by our Friends in the Beginning, and is still reprov'd by them that keep their Habitation, though some are become as wandering Stars through their own Pride, and the Prevalency of the Hour of Temptation that hath overtaken them; whereas, had they kept in the Channel of Love and Life, in the Orb and Order of the celestial Power, they had shined as fixed Stars in the Firmament of God for ever. And from the deep Sense that I have of the working of the Enemy of Zion's Peace, to rend and divide the Heritage of God, who, under the Pretence of crying down Man, Forms and Prescriptions, is crying down the heavenly Man, Christ Jesus, his blessed Order and Government, which he hath brought forth by his own Revelation and Power, through his faithful Witnesses. This I further*

further testify, first, that the Enemy, by these fair Pretences, strikes at the godly Care and Travail, that dwells upon the Spirits of many faithful Brethren, that all Things might be preserved sweet, comely, virtuous, and of good Report in the Church of God. Secondly, that there never was greater Necessity of this godly Care, than at this Day, since we were a People, wherein the Cross, by too many, is not so closely kept to as in Days past, and in which there is not only a great Convincement, but a young Generation descended of Friends, who, though they retain the Form their Education hath led them into; yet many of them adorn not the Gospel with that sensible, weighty, and heavenly Conversation, as becomes the Children of the undefiled Religion, and the Seed of that precious Faith, which works by the Love that overcomes the World. And the Lord God of Heaven and Earth, that hath sent his Son *Christ Jesus*, a Light into our Hearts and Consciences, to whose Search and Judgment all ought to, and must, bring their Deeds, and render up their Accounts, beareth holy Record, that for this End hath he moved upon the Spirits of his Servants, and for this good End only have his Servants given forth, recommended, and put in Practice those Things that are now in godly Use among his People, whether in this or other Nations, relating to *Mens* and *Womens Meetings*, and their divers and weighty Services. And further, in the Fear of the Almighty God, I shall

shall add, that heavenly Peace and Prosperity dwell with those, who are found in a holy and zealous Practice of them : wherefore I warn all, that they take heed of a slighting and obstinate Mind, and that they have a Care how they give Way to the Outcry of some, falsely intituled, *Liberty of Conscience against Imposition, &c.* for the End thereof is to lead back again, and give Ease to the carnal Mind; which, at last, will bring Death again upon the Soul to God, and the living Society of his Children. And, indeed, it is a great Shame, that any, who have ever known the Truth of God in the inward Parts, and the sweet Society of Brethren, especially those who were early in the Work of this blessed Day and heavenly Dispensation, should so far depart from the Fear and Awe of the Lord, as to use such unsavory, as well as untrue Expressions; this is very far from that meek Spirit of *Jesus*, and the first Love, which they pretend to have so singularly kept in, *which beareth all Things, suffereth all Things, and endureth all Things, and teacheth to keep the Word of Patience in the Hour of Tribulation*; nay, but this is judging of spiritual Things with a carnal and prejudiced Mind, stumbling at the Matter, for the Sake of the Persons through whom it comes, not eyeing nor weighing the Spirit the Thing arises from, but the Person by whom it is spoken, which darkens the Eye of the Understanding, and blinds by Prejudice the Mind that should discern, taste and judge; from whence many Mischiefs have sprung

prung to the Church of *Christ* in divers Ages ; nor is it the least Evil this Spirit of Strife is guilty of, even at this Day, that it useth the Words *Liberty of Conscience, and Imposition against the Brethren*, in the same Manner as our suffering Friends have been always accustomed to intend them against the persecuting Priests and Powers of the Earth ; as if it were the same Thing to admonish and reprove conceited, high-minded, loose or contentious Persons in the Church, as to compel Conformity in Matters of Faith and Worship, by worldly Violence upon the Persons and Estates of conscientious Dissenters : O such Iniquity God will not leave unreprieved !

This, dear Friends, I send among you, as a Token of my true Love, in the Revelation of the free Spirit of our God and Father, who have ever been a Friend to true Liberty, as in the State according to Law, so in the Church according to Scripture, and as it standeth in the Truth of *Jesus*, that makes those who love it free indeed. Let us all keep low, and remember the Rock from whence we were hewn, and dwell in a tender and reverent Sense of the daily Mercies and Providences of the Lord, looking well to our own Growth and Prosperity in his heavenly Way and Work, then shall the Desire of our Hearts be more and more after him, and the Remembrance of his Name,\* and with our Love to God will our Love increase one towards another, helping and aiding one another ; and I no way doubt, but God, who has brought us out of the Land  
of

of *Egypt*, and out of the House of Bondage, and delivered us from the Mouth of the Lion, and the Paw of the Bear, will preserve his People from this uncircumcised Spirit, that is not in Covenant with God, nor under the Yoke of his holy royal Law of *true spiritual Liberty*; for they that keep and walk in the Light of *Jesus* are fenced from the Power of this crooked Serpent, that seeks whom he may betray; nor are any stung by him but the Unwatchful, the Listeners, and Hearkeners after his jealous Whispers, and detracting Insinuations; they are such as make their Dwelling in the Earth, where his Region is, and where he creeps and twists, who is earthly, sensual and devilish, and so is all the Wisdom that comes from him.

My dear Friends, keep, I pray you, in the Simplicity of the Truth and Cross of *Jesus*, and wait for your daily Bread, and to be daily renewed from the Lord; look to your Increase about eternal Riches, and be sure to lay up Treasure in Heaven, that fadeth not away, that your Faith and Hope may have eternal Foundations, which the cross Occurrences of Time, and Fears of Mortality, cannot move; and beware of that loose and irreverent Spirit, which has not those in high Esteem among you, that are faithful in the Lord's Work, and that labour in his blessed Word and Doctrine. I plainly see a Coldness and a Shortness on this Hand, and be the Presence as it will, it is not pleasing to the Lord. They that love *Christ*, his Servants are dear to

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them,



them, and they bear a tender Regard to their Trials, Travails, Spendings and Sufferings, who seek not your's, but you, that you may all be presented blameless at the Coming of the great God, and our Saviour *Jesus Christ*, that so the Gospel Ministry and Testimony may be held up with holy fervent Love and godly Esteem, to the keeping under every raw and exalted Mind, and whatever may slight and turn against it, lest God, who has richly visited us with his Fatherly Visitations, and Day springing from on high, should remove his Blessing from among us; and place his Candlestick amidst other People. Be wise therefore, O Friends! for behold he is at the Door who must have an Account of your Stewardship; be watchful, keep to your first Love and Works, that so you may endure to the End, and be saved; and having overcome, you may have right to eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the Midst of the Paradise of God.

*The God of Peace, who hath brought our dear Lord Jesus from the dead, and us with him, more abundantly enrich you all with Wisdom and Knowledge, in the Revelation of himself, through Faith in his Son, by whom in these last Days he hath spoken to us, who is the blessed and only Potentate, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, who only hath Immortality, to whom be Honour and Power everlasting. Amen.*

*Your Friend and Brother in the Tribulation and Salvation of the enduring Kingdom of our God,*

William Penn.

*Worminghurst in Suffex, the 20th  
of the 9th Month, 1681.*

J U S T

# JUST MEASURES,

IN AN

## EPISTLE

OF

### PEACE *and* LOVE,

TO

Such Professors of the Truth, as are under any  
Dissatisfaction about the present ORDER

PRACTISED IN THE

### CHURCH *of* CHRIST.

---

By a Lover of the Truth and Them, W. P.

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COL. iii. 15.

*And let the Peace of God rule in your Hearts, to the which also  
ye are called in one Body, and be ye thankful.*

---

AN  
EPISTLE, &c.

Friends,

**I** Have, with a deep Sense and Sorrow, often beheld the Distance and Dissatisfaction you are under, in Reference to your ancient and faithful Brethren, and that Fellowship, which, I am sure, was once very dear and valuable with you, and I would have the Charity to hope, is what many of you desire still. And, for your Sakes that would not willingly think amiss, nor differ, nor divide from those that otherwise you have an Esteem for, and are in Judgment one with, as to the Worship and Doctrines of Truth, I desire to open my Mind, both with Tenderness and Plainness; and, if what I say has the Voice and Matter of Peace and Love in it, and may be helpful to you, in closing with your Brethren again, I shall greatly rejoice; in which, know this, I seek you not in the Words of Man's Wisdom, nor to raise Controversy, nor for Victory, nor any bye Ends, but for the Sake of that precious Fellowship and seamless Garment, in which the Truth clothed

us all in the Beginning, and with which it will cloath and comfort all its faithful Servants, and true Friends, to the End. First, I shall begin with *the Difference, and what you have both in Conference and Writing alledged for the Ground of your Dissatisfaction and Dissent.* Next I shall consider *the Nature and Merit of it;* and last of all, *give my Sense upon the whole Matter, in order to a better Understanding for the future.*

That there is a Difference, is but too plain ; for it has in some Parts proceeded to a Separation, as well to Places of Worship, as in Matters of Discipline. The Ground of this Dissatisfaction, upon which so great a Distance has been raised, you say is *requiring your Compliance with some Practices relating to Discipline, particularly Womens Meetings, and coming twice before Men and Womens Meetings about Marriages, before they are admitted to be solemnized among us,* some of you thinking, *that there is no Service for Womens Meetings at all;* others, *no Service in their being distinct from Mens Meetings, at least, no Necessity for either, and therefore no necessary Compliance to be required and insisted upon;* but every one left to their Liberty in Christ, lest *Imposition and Formality should prevail among us, as they have done in other religious Societies.* In this, I think, I have truly and fairly stated the Case on your Part, and given your Objection to our Practice, and the Reason why you dissent from it.

Now,

Now, Friends, I shall consider the Nature and Merit of this Dissatisfaction and Dissent, wherein I beseech your Attention, Patience and Candour, and I hope you will find, that we are clear of the Imposition and Formality you object or fear.

In the first Place, I do not find that you have any just Cause to fear, in general, an Infringement on your Christian Liberty, since it has been, and is most sincerely declared by the Brethren, chiefly concerned in the good Order and Service of the Church, that they have no Thought or Design of imposing any Thing upon the Consciences of Friends; or that Friends ought to have now any more than at the Beginning, any other Reason or Measure of Compliance or Conformity in Matters relating to God, than *the Conviction of the Light and Spirit of Christ in every Conscience*. But there is this Distinction to be considered well of, that the Matters in Difference are not such as require such an Exercise and Conviction of Conscience as is pleaded, because they relate not to Faith or Worship. Did they require Faith, or did they appertain to Worship, as if you were obliged to worship God *only in such a Place, Time, Gesture, Raiment, with such Words and Forms of Speech, &c.* which has been the Case of the Dissenters from the national Church, your Objection and Plea were good; but this, about which your Dissatisfaction arises, is purely *Discipline in Government, and not in Worship; Formality in Order, and not in Religion*. It is about Methods of regulating ourselves,

ourselves, as to the civil or outward Part of the Church, as we are a Society, how we may avoid Disorder, and preserve the Credit of our Society from Censure and Scandal.

For Instance, *to keep the Necessitous; as Poor, Aged, Sick, and Orphans; to reconcile Differences, to take Care of Births, Marriages, and Burials; in fine, to prevent, rebuke and restore disorderly Walkers.* To all which, I conceive, there is no Need of an Act of Faith, or other Exercise of Conscience, than, as the Apostle exhorts, *to be ready to every good Word and Work*; I mean here is nothing required to be believed as an Article of Faith; here is no Novelty or Formality in Worship introduced; or any Thing proposed as an End or Service for our Men and Womens Meetings, that can reasonably admit of the raising of such a Scruple of Conscience, since the Things proposed are Duties that all civil Societies, as well as Church Fellowships, agree in, as requisite to the Support of the Reputation of Fellowships and Societies.

Now this being the great and true End, Use, and Service of our Men and Womens Meetings; and that it is the End that always denotes and constitutes the Nature of the Means, it cannot justly be thought to be of the Nature of Imposition and Formality, as the Words are commonly taken in an ill Sense, to expect the Compliance of Members of a Society, to such Methods of Order as the Elders thereof have exhorted to; and the Generality of the People have embraced,

embraced, and which the most considerable Part of those that dissent, declare they dissent from rather for Fear of suffering an Infringement of their Christian Liberty, than any Dislike to the Practice itself; I say, this cannot be called or accounted such an Imposition upon Conscience, because they are Expedients of Order, and Methods of Rule, about Things universally agreed upon. The Thing will not bear the Word; for Instance, because I may say it is against my Conscience to confess to such an Article or Doctrine of Faith, or to worship God after such a prescribed Form, that therefore it would sound reasonable for me to say, *It is against my Conscience to submit to the Council of the Church for Ending of Differences; and it is against my Conscience, after having once told the Brethren I intend to marry such a Woman, to come again a Fortnight, or a Month after, to ask if they have informed themselves of mine and the Woman's Clearness, both towards Parents and other Persons, before we solemnize it.* Surely this would look to reasonable People an over tender, or an over righteous, or rather, indeed, an over free and large Conscience, that would scruple at twice or thrice publishing the Banns, to prevent Undutifulness to Parents, and Injury to Pre engagements, when those we profess to exceed require, in their Communion, that it be thrice done. In like Manner it would look very strange in me to call a Church-Care of circumspect Walking up to the religious Principles of the Society, that I have



have voluntarily embraced, an imposing or over driving of me.

But you object, *why must we go before Women? and why Women apart from Men?*

This still, Friends, can be no Imposition, as is before expressed; because *it is no Matter of Faith, nor Practice of Worship; but a referring still to our external Order of Life;* and we say Women as well as Men, because they are concerned, for they are Part of the Church of *Christ*; and the common Banns that are published in Churches, so called, or Markets, exclude not Women to make their Exception any more than Men. But why Women apart? say you. We think, for a very good Reason, the Church increaseth, which increases the Business of the Church; and Women, whose Bashfulness will not permit them to say or do much, as to Church-Affairs, before the Men when by themselves may exercise their Gifts of Wisdom and Understanding, in a discreet Care for their own Sex at least, which makes up not the least Part of the Business of the Church; and this while the Men are upon their proper Business also: So that as Men and Women make up the Church, Men and Women make up the Business of the Church; and therefore it is very reasonable they should be Helpers together in doing the Church's Business. This Way Women are made useful and serviceable in and to the Church, as were the holy Women of old, that were so much commended by the Apo-

file, for Deaconesses indeed. And, as I said before, their Businesses being hereby distinct, *two Businesses are doing at one and the same Time*, and, consequently, there must needs be a greater Dispatch, which, in country Places, and winter Seasons, where Friends come ten or fifteen Miles to Meeting, must needs be very convenient and comfortable. I may add, that there are divers Things, which seem peculiar to Women, that were not fit for Men, and in which Men did and would find themselves often at a Loss; which render their distinct Meetings farther convenient.

These are the Reasons and Motives to the present Practice of the Church of *Christ*, without infringing Christian Liberty, *by compelling Conscience to any Master of Faith or Practice, relating to Worship, we meaning, by our whole Order and Government, no other Thing than a careful Eye and Check upon Practice*; an Expediency against Irregularity in Conversation, whether towards them that are without, or those that are within the same Communion, to which the strong will submit, for the Sake of the weak.

My own Sense upon this whole Matter is, *That a Misapprehending the Intention of the Brethren, and an undistinguishing Zeal against Impositions on the one Hand, and a Fear on the other Side, that those who so mistook and misrendered the Design of the Brethren, were either high minded and unruly, or prone to undue Liberty, or that they, not being the first Promoters* of

of this Discipline in Government, detracted from them that were, and so would lessen the Credit and Authority of their Endeavours, with such as were peculiar Favourers; and that, in fine, their Dissent tended to the Breach of brotherly Love and Unity in the Church. I say, my Sense is, that this on each Side, with the Heats that followed, perhaps much worse than the Thing itself, gave Life to the Division that those that fear the Lord have truly mourned for. And since I have hinted the Heats that may have attended the Management of this Difference, be not offended that I say, the Difference through these Heats is now more in Spirit than Fact, in Mind than Matter. It is come in Fact to this, *whether the Care of Conversation should belong to Women, as well as Men, especially relating to their own Sex*, the Women being so great a Part of the Church? And over this, I think, you are got for the most Part. Secondly, whether the Women may meet separately from the Men? And for Answer to this, be pleased to take Notice of your own unavoidable Concessions: You allow Meetings of Care in general, and do not deny Women absolutely their Share among the Men, and that particular Members must be accountable to the Society they are of, in Point of Conversation, according to the Rules embraced by the said Society. I say, you own the End, you allow the Means, you refer the Choice of your Means to the Society, and you, as well as we, expect a Compliance with those

Rules. Then the Question is, whether in Fact Womens Meeting be a Part of that Discipline the Church admits of? And it is evident, that the Church of God does, generally speaking, receive and practise it, with Satisfaction and Advantage. I would therefore beseech you, Friends, to ponder in your Minds, upon what a narrow Point your Distance stands, and that the main and tender Point is allowed you, *viz. Conscience is free*, and unconcerned in the Question; and the visible Ground of Distance being so small, weigh with yourselves by what has been, what may be the Consequence of this lamentable Breach.

I am as much for Liberty as any Man; I ever was so, and hope I ever shall be for it; but we must refer it to a proper Object, or we shall abuse what we do so much prize, and pervert one of the greatest Privileges we can pretend to. I do not mean by the Liberty, we are to resign to the Benefit of Society, that which is private or personal; no, this does not enter into private or personal Liberty, concerning which, the Apostle taught us to bear, and not offend one another; as about Meats and Drinks; I may add, Cloaths, Houses, Trades, &c. so as there be no Excess, for that is every where wrong: These Things regard not Society, but a Man's self, and his private Liberty alone. What is it to the Society, what, or when I eat, what Sort of Cloathing I wear, or House I live in, or Trade I will be of, so that Excess or Uncomeliness

linefs be avoided ? This is ftill in my own Power, and many like Things, hard to be numbered, about which Society is not in the leaft concerned, nor in which any Member of it is interrupted, or called in Queftion. In the next Place, we do alfo all agree, that Faith muft not be forced, nor Worſhip conſtrained, for that grates upon Conſcience, which God only can effectually enlighten or rightly perſuade. But that bears not upon our Queſtion, as I ſaid before; for the Compliance, deſired in it, is about Order, not Faith; and that not about Worſhip, but Converſation, in which if you ſubmit your Liberty, it is for the Good of Society, and you have the Returns of it in the Benefit and Comfort thereof. Do you ſerve or take care of others, that before were free of that Engagement? Others alſo are tried by the ſame Rules, to ſerve and be concerned for you, that formerly owed you no Obligation; and if you are under the Notice and Reproof of others, as to your perſonal Conduct, they are equally under your's upon Occaſion; ſo that you loſe nothing but what you get, nor give nothing but what you receive again, and to a right Spirit and a good Mind this mutual Service will appear reaſonable, chriſtian, and requiſite. And as in no Age the Reſiſters and Gainſayers of Care and Order, in any of the Lord's eminent Servants, have paſſed without the Mark of God's Rebuke: ſo thoſe that have conteſted and opposed the Wiſdom of God in his faithful Servants, have ever failed of their Purpoſe, and been ſpall-ly

ly manifested to have been led by a wrong Spirit. And as observable it is, that those, by whom the Lord has eminently appeared, and who were the first Instruments of his several Dispensations to the Sons of Men, have always exercised that Authority among the People they have gathered, and have been constantly preserved from falling away, though some or other have risen against them with that Clamour, as if they had set up themselves, and were gone from what they taught or were, and took too much upon them. But what have they all come to? Read and judge.

Nor was it ever heard of in the Dealings of God with the Sons of Men, that he varied or changed his Dispensations in the Life-time of the Instruments of any of them, as some have been ready to imagine; nor yet in that Age in which he has brought them forth, which engages me to beseech you, in the Bowels of the Love of *Christ*, our only Root of Life and Light, and Love, and Peace, that you be like minded with your Friends and Brethren, and see that the Life and the Fellowship of the Truth be preserved in the Enjoyment and Practice of Fellowship, which will be, if the Love of God, which first made us love one another, be kept in; for that is a sovereign Antidote against all the Poison of Discontent, evil Jealousy, and the Divisions that are wont to follow. And instead of reproaching our Elders and Brethren, whom God has honoured, and whom we have honoured, and could have

have laid down our Lives for, and who know nothing by themselves, but that they are as true to the Lord, and in as good a Condition in the Truth, as ever they were; and have done, and intended in what they have done, as much the Benefit of the Lord's People. I say, instead of reproaching them with usurping Authority, and taking too much upon them, let us consider, that those whom we have received with so much reverent Love, and as worthy of double Honour in the greater Things, are not unworthy to be heard and followed by us in lesser Matters. Let us regard and value their Care, and love them for it: so true is that Saying among Men, *That is well spoken, which is well taken*; that the Bent and Purpose of a Man's Spirit is that which gives the just Reason of Acceptance or Rejection.

You have, dear Friends, judged too much after an outward Appearance, and you may see not truly there neither; open therefore your Hearts, your Souls and Spirits, and taste with the divine Sense of the tender and meek Truth, the Aim and End of Brethren; herein be a little more truly free and universal in your Minds, and you will perceive this Care has a large and a long Prospect for Good. The due Exercise of your spiritual Senses will answer all your Objections, and satisfy every upright Soul among you; but if you look out, mistake Liberty, mistake Imposition, mistake Formality, mistake the Nature and End of Things, and the Intention of your ancient Friends and Brethren in them, you will judge



judge carnally, and be ready to think as if outward Rule and Lordliness were aimed at, and a Departing from the Truth, even whilst our Care, in the Sight of the Lord, is for the Honour of it, in Reference to the young, the weak, and such as may be careless, and ready to fall asleep: for such some yet are, and such are yet like to be, and for their Sakes a Discipline, as to Conversation, must be, as well as that there are natural Infirmities, as Sickness, Age, &c. that unavoidably call for it; nor did, or ever can any Community subsist without it, and the Heats, Prejudice, and Rents, that have risen about the How or Manner of it, shew the Opposition not to be right, nor of a good Tendency; the End of that Order, in the Minds and Hands of those from whence we joyfully received the Testimony of the Truth, being the Glory of God, and Good of his People, as a primitive Christian Society.

To conclude: As this is not a Plea for Imposition, nor Forms of Worship, but Forms of Discipline, as to the Government and Behaviour of ourselves in our Converse, both with those that are without, and those that are within, and that there is no visible Communion or Society in this World of Bodies, but what is subject to them, and must, in some Sort, subsist by them; I beseech you, that we, as becomes a reasonable and modest People, and as dear Children, may be of one Heart, and one Mind, and walk together as those that have been Partakers of one Life, and that have drank into one Spirit; for it is a  
comely

comely Thing to see Brethren walk together in Love.

O Friends! let us labour against secret Animosities, watchings for evil Detraction, the Sin that flung the Angels out of their heavenly Station. Let us see to our own Spirits, how they are, if meek, lowly, humble, tender, by which the true and preserving Judgment is only known and felt; or if not high, fierce, hard, and prejudiced; for a Man may come to lose a good Frame of Spirit upon very Trifles. It is not always what the Matter is the Dispute arises upon; but how far the Thing is espoused, and what Place a Man suffers it to have in his Mind: if Jealousy, Reputation, Revenge, or Contradiction prevail, Division must follow. Some are apt to resent Things too soon, and carry it too far, even to Obstinacy, through the Workings of the evil One in a Mystery, so that though the Presence of the Quarrel may be some Fact or other, yet that has oftentimes the least Share in the Difference, it being inflamed and increased by the mysterious Workings of the Spirit of Strife and Variance in the Mind, according to an old Saying, *The greatest Feuds oftentimes arise from the slightest Causes*. Let me beseech and prevail with you to read and weigh the Bent and Force of the Apostle's Spirit in *Rom.* xii. also xiv. xix. and xv. 4, 5, 6. and especially xvi. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 Verses. Likewise *1 Cor.* xiv. 32, 33, weighty Places indeed. *2 Cor.* xiii. *Ephes.* iv. 1, 2, 3, 4. *Phil.* iii. 16, 17, 18. iv. 8, 9. *Col.* iii. 12, 14, 15, 16. *1 Thes.* v. 12, 13, 14. *2 Thes.* iii. 4, 5, 6. He often com-

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mands Order and Obedience to the apostolick Tradition in this Epistle, *Tit. i. 15. ii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Heb. xiii. 1. And 1 Peter iv. 8.* All which *exhort to Peace, brotherly Kindness, to be of one Mind, to study one Thing. O follow the Things that make for Peace, and not to contend, dispute, and strive one with another!* A blessed Doctrine, and it hath a blessed Reward. The Lord God Almighty dispose your Minds, my Friends, to a tender returning State; and frighten not yourselves with Designs of the Brethren, that have no Being, but in Jealousy and Misapprehension. I beseech you in the Lord, lay down every Mark or Insign of Difference or Separation, and behold our Arms as open as ever to receive you, and let your Heart be as our Heart, and then our Meetings your Meetings. Let the Fear and Awe of the Lord, the becoming Love of his precious Truth, which is *Christ* in us, the Hope of our Glory, who gave himself for us, to redeem us from the Enmity, Death and Curse, Disobedience had laid us under, melt and cement us into one Lump, Flesh of Flesh, and Bone of Bone, so shall our Joy exceed our Sorrow, and Tears be wiped from our Eyes on this Occasion, and God, our exceeding great and glorious Rewarder, be our Crown, Portion, and Diadem for ever.

*Your's,*

*In and for the Truth,*

W. P.

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AN  
E X T R A C T  
FROM  
G. F O X's Journal,  
A N N O 1676.

SOME that professed the Truth, and had made a great Shew therein, being gone from the Simplicity of the Gospel into Jangling, Division, and a Spirit of Separation, endeavoured to discourage Friends, especially the Women, from their godly Care and Watchfulness in the Church over one another in the Truth, opposing their Meetings, which, in the Power of the Lord, were set up for that End and Service. Wherefore I was moved of the Lord to write the following Epistle, and send it forth among Friends, for the Discovering of that Spirit, by which those Opposers were acted, and its Work and Way, in and by which it wrought, and to warn

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Friends

Friends of it, that they might not be betrayed by it.

All my dear Friends, live in the Seed of Peace, *Christ Jesus*, in whom ye have all Life. And that Spirit, that comes among you to raise up Strife, is out of *Christ*; for it is the Spirit, that is not easy to be intreated, nor gentle, so not of the Wisdom of God, which is justified of her Children; and so they that follow that Spirit, are none of Wisdom's Children. Now there is a Spirit, that hath made a Separation, and has been against Mens and Womens Meetings; yet has set up one of their own, whom they have given Power to; and that none shall sit among them, but whom they give Power to, but shall be looked upon as Usurpers of Authority. Now this Spirit and its Work is not of God, though it has made some Jumble among some; and the Path it may travel in, is through the earthly Affections, or the Unestablished, or Apostates. But all that are in the Life, and Spirit, and Light, and Grace, and Truth, and the Power of God, bar it out; and such as sit under their own Vine, *Christ Jesus*, and are grafted into him, have no Need of their Exhortation or Counsel; for the true Believers are entered into their Rest: and therefore all keep in the Gospel of Peace; and they that be Heirs of the Kingdom, and of it, keep in your Possession of it.

Now some that are of this Spirit have said to me, *they see no Service in Womens Meetings*. My Answer is, and hath been to them and such, if they

they be blind and without Sight, they should not oppose others; for there is none imposes any Thing upon them: for God never received the Blind for a Sacrifice, neither can his People. But *Christ* has inlightened all, and to as many as receive him, he gives *Power to become the Sons of God*; and such as be Heirs of his Power, and of his Gospel, which brings Life and Immortality to Light, they can see over him that has darkened them; and all such do keep the Order of the Gospel, the Power of God, and their Meetings in it, which preserves them in Life and Immortality. And all these do see the great Service of the Mens and of the Womens Meetings, in the Order of the Gospel, which is the Power of God; for they are Meet-Helps in this Power, which is the Authority of their Meetings. And now I say to all you that be against Womens Meetings, or the Mens, and say, *you see no Service for the Womens Meetings*, and oppose them: you are therein out of the Power of God, and his Spirit you live not in; for God saw a Service for the Assemblies of the Women in the Time of the Law, about those Things that appertained to his Worship and Service, and to the holy Things of his Tabernacle; and so do they in the same Spirit see now their Service in the Gospel. Many Things in those Meetings being more proper for the Women to see into, than the Men; and they, in the Power and Wisdom of God, may inform the Men of such Things, as are not proper for them; and the Men

Men may inform the Women of such Things, as are not proper for them, as Meet-Helps each unto another. For in the Time of the Law, by the Law of God the Women were to offer, as well as the Men; and so in the Time of the Gospel much more are they to offer their spiritual Sacrifices; for they are all called, both Men and Women, a royal Priesthood, and they are of the Household of Faith, and they are the living Stones, that make up the spiritual Building, which *Christ* is the Head of, and are to be encouraged in their Labour in the Gospel; for all Things that they do, both Men and Women, are to be done in the Power of God. And all such as see no Service for these Womens Meetings, or the Mens, but do oppose them, and make Strife among Friends, are in the same Spirit of the World that is against, and forbids our other Meetings; and are in the same Spirit of the World, that hath been and is against Womens Speaking in Meetings, and says, *They must be silent, &c.* though the same Apostle commands, *that Men should keep Silence as well as the Women*, if there were not an Interpreter. And therefore all Friends you may see, that the Spirit of the World hath entered such Opposers, though they come under another Colour; for they would not have us to meet at all. And these are against the Womens Meetings, and some of them against the Mens also, and say, *they see no Service for them*: then they may hold their Tongues and not

not oppose them, that do see their Service for God in these Meetings.

Therefore all you that feel the Power of God, and your Service for God, as aforesaid, in them, you Men and Women keep your Meetings in the Power of God, the Authority of them, as they were settled in it, and then ye will be preserved both over this Spirit, that opposes them, and over the Spirit of the World, that opposes your other Meetings; for it is all one in the Ground, and would bring you into Bondage: for such are out of the peaceable Gospel, who oppose its Order, and out of the Faith that works by Love, and out of the Wisdom that is gentle, and easy, and peaceable, &c. and out of the Kingdom that stands in Peace and Joy. Therefore keep over that Spirit that sows Discord or Dissention, and would draw you from your Habitation and Possession in the Order of the Gospel; for it is the same Spirit that deceived *Adam* and *Eve*, by which they lost their Habitation in the Righteousness and Holiness, and their Dominion, and so that Spirit got over them, and so it would get over you. One while it will tell you, *it sees no Service for your Meetings*, another Time oppose you; but I say, this is the blind Spirit, which is out of the Power of God, and which the Power of God is over; and therefore keep in the Power, that you may stand up for your Liberty in *Christ Jesus*, Males and Females, Heirs of him and of his Gospel, and his Order, and so stand up for your Liberty in the Gospel, and in the Faith, which



which *Christ Jesus* hath been the Author of; for if ye lose it, and let another Spirit get over you, ye will not so soon regain it again; for I knew the Devil would bestir himself in his Instruments, when Mens and Womens Meetings came to be set up, and all in the Power, Light and Truth, and Heirs of the Gospel, to take their Possession of it in every County and City, in it to walk, and to watch one over another, and in it to take Care of God's Glory and Honour, and his precious Truth, and to see that all did walk in the Truth, and as becomes the Gospel, and to see that nothing was lacking; and so whatsoever was decent, modest, virtuous, lovely, comely, righteous, and of good Report, to follow after; and to admonish and exhort all that were not faithful, and to rebuke all that did evil. I knew that this would give such a Check to all loose Speakers, Talkers and Walkers; I did not expect but that there would be an Opposition against such Meetings; but never heed, Truth will come over them all, and is over them all, and Faith must have the Victory; for the Gospel, and its Order is everlasting, and the Seed, *Christ*, is the Beginning and the Ending, and will outlast all, the *Amen*, in whom we have Peace. I say, all that do oppose the Mens and Womens Meetings, or that Marriages should be laid before them, or of recording of Condemnations of Sin and Evil, or admonishing or exhorting such as walk not in the Truth, they are of a loose Spirit, and their Spirits tend to *Looseness*, and let them take them  
that

that will ; for Truth will not have them, nor will have none of their Sacrifices ; for nothing is accepted of God, but what is done in Truth, and in his Spirit, which is peaceable. And the Authority of our Mens and Womens Meetings is the Power of God, and all the Heirs of the Gospel are Heirs of that Authority and Dignity, and this is of God, and shall answer the Witness of God in all ; and the greatest Opposers of this Practice and Work will be, and are such, as have been convinced of God's Truth, but have not lived in it ; and such were the greatest Troublers of the Church in the Days of *Moses*, and in the Days of the Apostles ; but mark their End, and read what became of them all. And therefore all keep your Habitation in Truth, and therein ye may see what became of all the Opposers of it for twenty Years past : they are all gone, and the Truth lives and reigns, and the Seed is over all, and all is one in it, in Rest, Peace, and Life everlasting, and therein they sit down together in the heavenly Places in *Christ Jesus*, the  
**A M E N.**

G. F.

SWARTHMORE,  
*the 5th of the 8th Month, 1676.*

**THE END.**